DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 745 EC 211 024

AUTHOR Joyce, Bonnie; Wienke, Wilfred
TITLE The Importance of Rural Behavioral Disorder Teacher Competencies to Teachers and Faculty.
PUB DATE Feb 88
NOTE 10p.; In: Alternative Futures for Rural Special Education. Proceedings of the Annual ACRES (American Council on Rural Special Education) National Rural Special Education Conference; see EC 211 005.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Disorders; Competence; *Competency Based Teacher Education; Delivery Systems; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Knowledge Level; *Rural Education; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Qualifications; Teaching Methods; Training
IDENTIFIERS *Competency Lists; *Teacher Competencies; West Virginia

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted as part of a project to increase the number of certified teachers who serve students with behavior disorders in the rural regions of West Virginia, improve the quality of training to participants at both the elementary and secondary levels, and retain certified teachers who teach students with behavior disorders. Improving the quality of training begins with developing and validating a set of competencies that are appropriate for teachers serving students with behavior disorders in rural regions. A total of 34 behavior disorder and rural education teacher competencies were collected from previous research and were grouped into six major categories including behavior management, instruction, service delivery, consultation, knowledge, and instructional support. Judgments regarding the importance of the competencies--sought from 279 teachers--were obtained from 173 teachers of behavior-disordered students and six faculty members who teach higher education courses in behavior disorders. Results indicated that there was a high level of agreement between faculty members and teachers regarding the importance of all competencies. Specific procedures are described for subsequent evaluation of the performance validity for these competencies. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED299745

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Doris Helge

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Bonnie Joyce, Ph.D.
West Virginia University
504 Allen Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506

Wilfred Wienke, Ed.D.
West Virginia University
504 Allen Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506

The Importance of Rural Behavioral Disorder Teacher Competencies to Teachers and Faculty

The following study was conducted under the auspices of the Rural Behavior Disorder Project at West Virginia University. This project is part of a 3 year grant that is funded through the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The project is specially designed to meet 3 objectives that include 1) increasing the number of certified teachers who serve students with behavior disorders in the rural regions of West Virginia, 2) improving the quality of training to participants at both the elementary and secondary levels, and 3) retaining certified teachers who teach students with behavior disorders.

Improving the quality of training is perhaps the most important objective of this project because the successful accomplishment of the other two objectives is contingent on the success of the training objective. By adequately training the participants to teach students with behavior disorders in rural areas, it is possible to decrease West Virginia's high attrition rate of special education teachers and thereby increase the number of certified teachers currently working in the state. This is an important concern because the available data indicates that 80% of the special education teachers in West Virginia leave the state within one year of certification. This attrition rate is extremely high, even for rural areas where the rate is between 30-50% (Helge, 1983b).

The first step for improving the quality of training is to develop and validate a set of competencies that are appropriate for teachers serving students with behavior disorders in rural regions. This is not an easy task for two reasons. First, most competencies that have been developed are specifically targeted for one categorical area such as behavior disorders, learning disabilities, mental retardation, or rural populations. However, such competencies rarely combine two areas such as behavior disorders and rural populations. Second, because of the heterogeneity of rural areas, few competencies that are developed for one rural community are applicable to other rural areas (Sher & Rosenfeld, 1977). Rural communities, including

EC 210 234

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

fishing villages in New England, agricultural counties in the midwest, ranching communities in the Dakotas, and coal towns in Appalachia, are so diverse and complex that few teacher training competencies are amenable to all areas. It is important, therefore, to specifically design training competencies that are appropriate to the unique cultural characteristics of the state's rural regions (Moriarty, 1981; Zetler, 1980).

In order to validate the competencies, two procedures are necessary. The first procedure involves content validation and requires individuals, at whom the educational process is aimed, to identify the needed competencies by rating the importance of each proposed competency (Raymaekers & Bacquelaine, 1985; Madaus & Pullin, 1987). In the second procedure, an empirical, predictive, or concurrent link is established between each individual's rating of the importance of each competency and his or her's performance on each competency in the classroom. In the following paper, a study concerning the content validation of rural behavior disordered competencies is discussed. This is followed by a description of the proposed method for performance validation of the same competencies.

Method

Participants

Judgments regarding the importance of the competencies were obtained from two groups of participants: 1) Teachers in West Virginia who teach students with behavior disorders, and 2) faculty who teach courses in behavior disorders at West Virginia's institutes of higher education. A total of 279 BD teachers and 6 faculty members were asked to participate in the study.

Instruments

Behavior disordered and rural competencies were collected from previous research. Most BD competencies were taken from studies completed by Cullinan, Epstein, and Schultz (1986), and George and George (1987). The rural competencies were primarily taken from Barker (1986), Helge (1983), Marrs (1984), Paulson and Anderson (1987), and Wood, Webster, and Eicher (1987). Specific competencies were selected that met two criteria. First, the competency must have been previously field tested and identified as an important skill. Second, it must have been relevant to behavior disorders or rural teacher education. A total of 34 competencies were grouped into six major categories including behavior management, instruction, service delivery, consultation, knowledge, and instructional support. Direction for completing the questionnaire required the teacher to rate the importance of each competency by circling a number ranging from 1 (very important) to 5 (not very important).

A demographic data form consisting of 21 questions was also developed and attached to the questionnaire. Questions on the form were open-ended and concerned the teachers' educational and work related experiences.

Pilot Test

The questionnaire was field tested on six graduate students who were enrolled in a course at West Virginia University. All graduate students were teachers of students with behavior disorders in rural areas of the state, and were seeking a masters degree or certification in behavior disorders. The students were asked to provide suggestions for increasing the clarity of the directions, competencies, and questions that were included on the questionnaire and on the demographic data form. Based on this feedback, minor revisions were made on the questionnaire that did not affect the content of the competencies, and two additional questions were added to the demographic form.

Procedures for Content Validation

All school district superintendents in West Virginia were mailed a letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their permission for us to distribute the questionnaire through the schools to all teachers serving the behaviorally disordered population within their county. Of the 55 superintendents in West Virginia, 46 gave permission to distribute the questionnaire.

In the 46 counties, 279 teachers who serve students with behavior disorders, were identified by calling each director of special education and requesting a list of the BD teachers in their county. School addresses were also obtained. All identifying information was collected via telephone, except in a few cases were the county wanted to mail the list of teacher names and addresses to the project coordinator.

Faculty names and addresses were identified by calling the special education department at each college and university within the state. Faculty members who were included in general education departments, but taught at least one course in behavior disorders, were included in the study.

After identifying all possible participants, a cover letter indicating the purpose of the study, the questionnaire, the demographic data form, and a return envelope were mailed to all 279 BD teachers. A similar cover letter, a return envelope, and the questionnaire were mailed to all six faculty members. After the first mailing, one hundred twenty four teachers in behavior disorders (44%) and all faculty members returned the questionnaire. A second mailing two months later resulted in 49 additional teacher responses for a total of 173 (62%).

Results

Results of the questionnaire and the demographic data form were analyzed using the Stat View 512 program with a Macintosh microcomputer. The relative importance of each of the 34 competencies was determined by calculating the mean rating for

each competency by each of the two professional groups (faculty and teachers). These results are listed in Table 1. An unpaired t-Test was conducted to identify differences between the two groups for each competency. A significant difference at the p .05 level was not found for any competency.

The relative importance of the competencies was also determined by comparing the mean rating of competencies for each of the six categories. These results are listed in Table 2. These ratings show that there was little difference between the categories. The lowest mean rating, however, occurred within the area of behavior management. This indicates that those competeincies related to rural concerns are more important for teachers serving students with behavior disorders in rural areas than are those competencies regarding behavior disorders.

Discussion

Results of this study indicate that there is a high level of agreement between faculty members and teachers regarding the importance of all competencies. This is an important finding because it demonstrates that the rural behavior disorder competencies have content validity and thus can be tested for performance validity.

As of this writing, performance validity for these competencies has not been performed. However, it does represent the next step in the validation process. To test performance validity, performance on those competencies having content validity, will be linked to the teachers' teaching performance within the classroom to determine which competencies most contribute to quality teaching.

There are three major factors involved in the performance validation process. These include instruction, video taping of teachers' performance, and data analysis. Instruction will be provided to 9 teachers serving students with behavior disorders in rural areas. These teachers will be graduate students who are seeking certification in behavior disorders and who have completed the majority of their course work. The teachers will be required to enroll in a course that is specifically designed to include those competencies that have previously been validated for content. Competencies that are similar in content will be grouped together to form 9 different topics. Instruction will be provided through weekly seminars with each teacher serving as a group leader for one of the topics. Class discussions will be enhanced through assigned readings of journal articles representing each of the topics and through video tapes of the teachers demonstrating the competencies in their own classroom.

At the beginning of the semester, and prior to class instruction, all teachers will be video taped for 1 to 2 hours in their own classroom. Although short, these tapes will form a

baseline showing each teacher's current level of teaching proficiency. Teachers then will be video taped every two weeks throughout the semester so changes in teaching performance can be documented. Segments of these video tapes that demonstrate the correct use of the various competencies will be shared with teachers at the weekly seminar. Positive feedback regarding the use of the competencies will be provided by the instructor and other teachers in the class.

In order to determine if the competencies actually contribute to improvements in the quality of teaching, it is first necessary to identify what is meant by "improvements in the quality of teaching". For the purposes of this study, teaching improvement will be identified by positive changes in students' academic and conduct behavior. To collect data regarding changes in academic performance, teachers will be required to daily administer a 3 minute probe consisting of one type of academic behavior (e.g. reading). While the student completes the probe, the teacher will record the number of correct and incorrect academic responses using an Assistant TM microcomputer. This is a portable microcomputer specifically designed to measure and record behaviors in the natural environment. Teachers will then chart the data onto a logarithmic graph so the degree of academic change can be determined. The teacher will also use the microcomputer to measure and record the frequency and/or duration of specific conduct problems exhibited by the student. This data will also be charted on a graph so changes in student performance can be calculated. Reliability of this information will be checked through the video tapes of the teachers' teaching.

Besides determining improvements in the quality of teaching, it will be necessary to collect data on the frequency and duration of the competencies used by the teachers in their classrooms. This data will be collected by analyzing the video tapes. Two trained observers will record the data independently, using the Assistant TM microcomputer, so reliability between observers can be determined. Once this data is collected, it will be correlated to improvements in the teaching performance to determine what effect the competencies had in regards to quality teaching.

Although the validation process described above may not represent a pure scientific study, it does provide some systematic efforts for providing performance validation within the natural environment. Natural studies such as this, can provide additional information regarding variables, principles, and procedures for teacher training that can be more empirically studied in the future (Kunkel, 1987).

References

Barker, B. (1986). The role of the microcomputer in rural schools. The Rural Educator, 8 (1), 1-3.

Cullinan, D., Epstein, M. H., Schultz, R. M. (1986). Importance of SED teacher competencies to residential, local, and university education authorities. Teacher Education and Special Education, 9 (2), 63-70.

George, M. P., & George, N. L. (1987). Transporting behaviorally disrodered adolescence: A descriptive analysis. Behavioral Disorders, 12, 185-192.

Helge, D. I. (1983a). Images: Issues and trends in rural special education. Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, National Rural Development Institute.

Helge, D. I. (1983b). The state of the art of rural special education. Exceptional Children, 50 (4), 294-305.

Kunkel, J. H. (1987). The future of JABA: A comment. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 20 (4), 329-333.

Madaus, G. F. & Pullin, D. (1987). Teacher certification tests: Do they really measure what we need to know? Phi Delta Kappan, 69 (1), 31-38.

Marrs, L. W. (1984). A bandwagon without music: Preparing rural special educators. Exceptional Children, 50 (4), 334-342.

Moriarty, T. E. (1981). Unique qualities of rural teachers in western South Dakota. The Small School Forum, 2 (3), 29-31.

Paulson, D. & Anderson, E. J. (1987). A survey of microcomputer technology use in rural special education. Teacher Education and Special Education, 10 (2), 97-103.

Raymaekers, E. & Bacquelaine, M. (1985). Basic education for rural development. Prospects, 15 (3), 455-470.

Sher, J. P., & Rosenfeld, S. A. (1977). Public education in sparsely populated areas of the United States. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.

Wood, R. W., Webster, L., & Eicher, C. E. (1987). A survey of rural principals: Aids prevention education. The Rural Educator, 8 (8), 20-23.

Zetler, A. (1980, December). Population sparsity and geographic isolation as it relates to staff recruitment and retention. National Rural Project Newsletter.

Table 1
Means of the Importance of Competencies for Both Groups

Competency	Teacher	Faculty
1. Implement a positive approach to classroom management, including use of behavioral strategies.	1.4	1.7
2. Provide a structured classroom environment.	1.6	1.8
3. Use a variety of techniques to conduct a behavioral change program.	1.7	1.5
4. Identify the effects of a behavior management program on the behavior of the student.	1.8	2.0
5. Implement a benavior program to enhance generalization and maintenance of behavior improvements to other settings.	1.7	1.3
6. Develop and implement protective intervention skills for managing aggressive BD students.	2.2	2.3
7. Provide strategies for facilitating acquisition maintenance, and generalization of instructed academic and social skills.	2.0	1.7
8. Provide knowledge of curriculum in a variety of subject areas.	2.2	2.5
9. Identify the effects of instructional materials and strategies on student performance.	2.5	2.2
10. Implement skills for training seriously emotionally disordered students.	2.3	1.8
11. Identify appropriate instructional software computer programs for teaching academic skills.	3.1	3.3
12. Use the computer as a data management tool and instructional system.	3.0	2.8
13. Identify alternative models for delivering services to BD students to rural areas.	2.5	2.0
14. Identify methods for recruiting volunteers to assist in classroom activities.	3.0	2.8
15. Implement strategies for teaching students in a generic, non-categorical program.	2.8	3.0
16. Demonstrate effective public relation skills with local citizens to facilitate the acquisition of resources not provided by the local school.	2.6	2.8
17. Participate in a personnel support team for sharing resources and teacher expertise.	2.6	2.7
18. Implement strategies for interfacing with the juvenile justice system.	2.5	2.5
19. Demonstrate skills for working with agencies in rural communities to facilitate cooperativeness.	2.4	2.0
20. Demonstrate skills for working with parents of rural students.	1.9	1.7
21. Demonstrate skills for working with other teachers and school personnel to facilitate mainstreaming efforts.	1.6	1.8
22. Demonstrate skills for effectively training paraprofessionals.	2.2	2.2
23. Demonstrate skills to effectively interact with law enforcement/juvenile justice system.	2.4	2.3
24. Demonstrate awareness of the legal implications regarding the education of BD students.	2.3	2.7
25. Demonstrate knowledge of the judicial system.	2.6	3.2

Table 1 (continued)

Competency	Teacher	Faculty
26. Recognize and manage specific medical conditions effecting rural students with behavior disorders.	2.4	2.3
27. Identify characteristics specific to rural cultures, mores and customs.	2.4	1.3
28. Provide skills for facilitating appropriate school bus behavior for students with behavior disorders.	2.2	1.3
29. Demonstrate methods for building a local BD teacher support system in the rural environment.	2.5	2.0
30. Develop and implement strategies for coping with the remoteness to services and other resources.	2.5	1.8
31. Identify procedures for improving the physical environment.	2.5	1.8
32. Develop and implement time management skills.	2.2	2.0
33. Ability to teach independently without supervision.	2.0	1.8
34. Demonstrate ability to acquire resources not provided by the school.	2.2	2.4

Table 2
Mean Ratings for Each Category

Category	Mean Rating
Behavior Management	1.75
Instruction	2.64
Service Delivery	2.65
Consultation	2.29
Knowledge	2.27
Instructional Support	2.16